

# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

MINE  
ACTION  
REVIEW

CLEARING CLUSTER  
MUNITION REMNANTS  
2023

## KEY DATA

### CLUSTER MUNITION CONTAMINATION:

**BELIEVED TO BE LIGHT**  
BUT NO NATIONAL BASELINE ESTIMATE

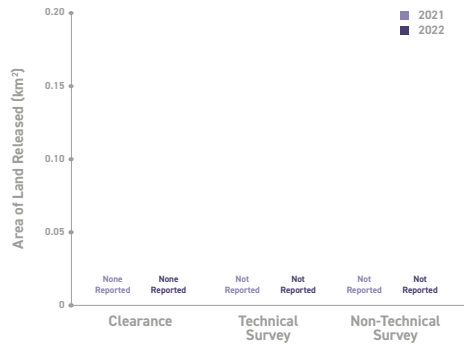
SUBMUNITION  
CLEARANCE IN 2022

**NONE  
REPORTED**

SUBMUNITIONS  
DESTROYED IN 2022

**NOT REPORTED**

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) should ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) as a matter of priority.
- DR Congo should comply with its obligations under international human rights law to clear cluster munition remnants (CMR) on territory under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible.
- The Congolese Mine Action Coordination Centre (CCLAM) should submit annual reports on the extent of explosive ordnance contamination and mine action sector developments.
- DR Congo should submit a detailed work plan, including a timeline for survey and/or clearance of all remaining CMR contamination and prompt, regular, and comprehensive reports on the progress of survey and clearance.
- CCLAM should specify when the long-delayed survey of Aru and Dungu territories will take place.

## CLUSTER MUNITION SURVEY AND CLEARANCE CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT

- Commission Nationale de Lutte Antimines (CNLAM)
- Centre Congolais de Lutte Antimines (CCLAM)

### NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
- Police Nationale Congolaise
- Afrique pour la Lutte Antimines (AFRILAM)

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- DanChurchAid (DCA)

### OTHER ACTORS

- United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

## UNDERSTANDING OF CMR CONTAMINATION

DR Congo has a small amount of CMR contamination but the precise extent is not known. An Article 7 report submitted voluntarily at the end of May 2022, the first in eight years and the latest data available, recorded six confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) containing CMR in four provinces affecting a total of 161,523m<sup>2</sup>, almost double the area recorded in the previous Article 7 report submitted in 2014 (see Table 1).<sup>1</sup>

**Table 1: Cluster munition-contaminated area by province (at end 2021)<sup>2</sup>**

Province	Territory	CHAs	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Ituri	Aru	3	3,406
South Kivu	Shabunda	1	719
Tanganyika	Kalemie	1	37,000
Equator	Bolomba	1	120,398
<b>Totals</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>161,523</b>

The main change since DR Congo's previous Article 7 report in 2014 was the addition of a CHA in Equator province amounting to 120,398m<sup>2</sup>, representing nearly three-quarters of identified contamination. Since the previous report, DR Congo had also released a CHA of 3,015m<sup>2</sup> in Tshopo province and reduced its estimate of CMR contamination in Ituri from 40,750m<sup>2</sup> to 3,406m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>3</sup>

The first estimate of CMR contamination came from a national survey that CCLAM said was conducted in tandem with a survey of anti-personnel mine contamination in 2013–14. It identified five confirmed hazardous areas covering 17,590m<sup>2</sup> containing CMR, all of which have since been cleared. The survey did not, however, cover Aru, a territory in Ituri province, and Dungu, a territory in Haut Uele province, where insecurity prevented access to survey teams.

DR Congo's most recent National Mine Action Strategy 2018–19, prepared with support from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and finalised in November 2017, said that in addition to mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), "some areas contaminated by submunitions have also been reported but the areas affected remain negligible".<sup>4</sup>

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The mine action sector is overseen by the Commission Nationale de Lutte Antimines (CNLAM), a multi-sectoral body which is supposed to meet twice a year and is composed of deputies from both parliamentary chambers, officials from four ministries, and representatives of five civil society organisations linked to mine action.<sup>5</sup>

CCLAM, which was established in 2012, manages the sector with support from the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS).<sup>6</sup> CCLAM is responsible for setting strategy, accrediting operators, information management, budgeting, and resource mobilisation. Law 11/007 of 9 July 2011 underpins the national mine action programme.<sup>7</sup> CCLAM took over from UNMAS as the national focal point for demining in early 2016 overseeing accreditation, issuing task orders, conducting quality assurance (QA)/quality control (QC) and managing the national database but lack of capacity remained a concern for operators.<sup>8</sup> The government has been providing US\$530,000 in funding for CCLAM's operating expenses since 2018, but has not provided funding for operations.<sup>9</sup>

UNMACC, established in 2002 by UNMAS, previously coordinated mine action through offices in the capital, Kinshasa, and in Goma, Kalemie, Kananga, Kisangani, and Mbandaka. UNMACC was part of the UN Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO). In 2014, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2147 (2014), mine action was removed from MONUSCO's mandate.<sup>10</sup>

1 Voluntary CCM Article 7 Report (covering the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2021), Form F; and email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, Coordinator, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

2 Voluntary CCM Article 7 Report (covering the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2021), Form F.

3 Ibid.; and email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

4 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines en République Démocratique du Congo 2018–2019", CCLAM, November 2017, p. 8.

5 Ibid., p. 11.

6 Ibid.

7 Email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

8 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, NPA, 5 March 2018; Bill Marsden, MAG, 11 May 2018; and Guillaume Zerr, Humanity and Inclusion, 24 May 2018.

9 Emails from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, CCLAM, 3 June 2019; and UNMAS Headquarters, 24 July 2023.

10 UN Security Council Resolution 2147, 28 March 2014.

UNMAS now operates with a mandate to provide explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and improvised explosive devices disposal (IEDD) services in support of MONUSCO in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces. In 2023, it had a total staff of 26: 12 international and 14 national staff who are headquartered in Goma, North Kivu, but also work from offices in Kinshasa, Beni, Bukavu (South Kivu), and Bunia (Ituri).<sup>11</sup> In line with recommendations of a 2019 independent review of MONUSCO, UNMAS also works to build national capacity for managing explosive hazards, working with the accredited national NGO, Afrique pour la Lutte Antimines (AFRILAM) for mine clearance, as well as the Emergency Development Action Bureau (BADU), Synergie des organisations paysannes de développement intégral (SYOPADI), Synergie pour la Lutte Antimines (SYLAM) and Action concrète pour la lutte antimines (ACOLAM) to conduct explosive ordnance risk education (EORE).<sup>12</sup>

CCLAM hosts the national Mine Action Working Group with the participation of other mine action organisations to share information and discuss policy, planning, tasking, progress, and challenges. It met on a quarterly basis in 2021.<sup>13</sup> No information on 2022 was available at the time of writing.

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

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The DR Congo does not appear to have national standards or policies covering the protection of the environment during mine action operations.

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## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The national mine action strategy for 2018–19 stipulated that all mine action activities, particularly those related to risk education and victim assistance, must reflect the different needs of individuals according to age and gender, in a non-discriminatory manner. It also stated that the principles of non-discrimination against women as set out in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) are to be respected, ensuring that women participate in all essential stages of mine action (planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation), and that activities take into account the special needs of women and girls.<sup>14</sup>

CCLAM reported in 2019 that approximately 30% of operational staff in survey and clearance teams were women and only around 7% of managerial or supervisory positions were held by women. It said that local customs limiting the employment roles which are appropriate for women were an obstacle to hiring female staff. CCLAM reported that mine action survey teams are gender balanced and that efforts are undertaken to ensure that all community groups, including women and children, are consulted. It also noted, however, the need to continue raising awareness on gender equality

in certain communities as local customs can discriminate against women undertaking certain categories of work.<sup>15</sup> No updated information was available for 2022 at the time of writing.

UNMAS says promoting gender and inclusion are a priority and it has a Gender and Diversity work plan to ensure it is mainstreamed across the programme. Women were five of UNMAS's fourteen international staff in 2021, including a programme manager, a programme officer, a service support manager, an associate programme officer, and a human resources associate. The 11 national staff included three women (an administration assistant, an administration/human resources associate, and a senior information technology assistant). No information was received for 2022, but in 2023, women made up 46% of UNMAS staff in DR Congo.<sup>16</sup> AFRILAM had 29 staff in 2023, including six women: two EOD operators, a medical officer, two logistics staff, and a multi-task team leader.<sup>17</sup>

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11 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 24 July 2023.

12 Ibid.; UNMAS website, updated March 2022; and email from UNMAS Headquarters, 24 July 2023.

13 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, UNMAS, 31 May 2022; and Miroslav Skoumal, Country Director, DanChurchAid (DCA), 26 April 2023.

14 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, pp. 15–16.

15 Email from Maître Sudi Alimasi Kimputu, CCLAM, 3 June 2019.

16 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 24 July 2023.

17 Emails from Jean-Denis Larsen, UNMAS, 31 May 2022; and UNMAS Headquarters, 24 July 2023.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

CCLAM took over responsibility for information management (IM) from UNMAS in 2016 but has lacked the capacity and resources to manage data and operate effectively the national Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. As a result, data are not considered up to date or reliable. Operator access is also complicated by the fact that CCLAM decides which information it is prepared to share.

The 2018–19 national strategy acknowledged a need to build staff capacity, improve data collection, update the database on a regular basis, and provide data disaggregated by age and gender.<sup>18</sup> Persistent issues have included gaps in data; lack of maintenance; reporting on land release that did not comply with international terminology; misreporting items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) as mines; and a lack of verification of incoming reports.<sup>19</sup>

Until 2020, CCLAM information management received support from UNMAS, which assisted monthly updates of data to improve operational coordination, collaborated on developing an information management work plan, and provided a range of computer and digital hardware.<sup>20</sup> Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) also previously provided refresher training for CCLAM staff in use of IMSMA and the associated Geographic Information System (GIS).<sup>21</sup> In 2020, CCLAM did not request IM support from UNMAS and a request for support from the GICHD was not met due to the Centre's lack of capacity and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>22</sup>

UNMAS maintains an internal database which is said to be updated regularly.<sup>23</sup>

## PLANNING AND TASKING

In January 2022, DR Congo completed a "National Strategic Plan for the Fight Against Anti-Personnel Mines and Explosive Remnants of War", including cluster munitions, for 2023 to 2032. The plan sets out general objectives for the coming decade, including completing mine clearance by 2025 and CMR clearance by 2032. The strategy aims to ensure all mined areas are cleared, survey of areas affected by cluster munitions and other ERW is completed rapidly, and a decentralised EOD capacity is established to tackle residual contamination.<sup>24</sup> The 76-page strategy sets out a detailed budget for the 10 years of the plan<sup>25</sup> but provides no details or timeline for survey or clearance of hazardous areas.

The new strategy follows on from the National Mine Action Strategy 2018–19, prepared with support from UNMAS and the GICHD, which focused on seeking to fulfil DR Congo's Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's Article 5 obligations by 2020, one year ahead of its extended 2021 deadline.<sup>26</sup> DR Congo has yet to fulfil its APMBC Article 5

clearance obligations. The strategy also set out the objective of completing procedures for ratifying the Convention on Cluster Munitions by the end of 2018.<sup>27</sup> The former strategy had identified three strategic pillars: effective and efficient management of the explosive threat; ensuring the national programme had the capacity to manage residual contamination in a sustainable manner; and that the legal framework of the mine action programme was strengthened through the adoption of national laws and other implementing measures and adherence to relevant treaties.<sup>28</sup> None of these goals was met.

Tasking continues to be challenged by the remote location of many hazardous areas and database weaknesses, including misidentification of ERW as mines and the addition of hazards to the database without robust evidence of the presence of explosive ordnance.

18 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 14.

19 Skype interview with Jean-Denis Larsen, NPA, 24 April 2019; and email, 24 May 2019.

20 Email from Aurelie Fabry, UNMAS, 13 April 2020.

21 Email from Jean-Denis Larsen, NPA, 24 May 2019.

22 Emails from Aurelie Fabry, UNMAS, 28 April and 7 June 2021.

23 Email from Jean-Denis Larsen, UNMAS, 31 May 2022.

24 "Plan Stratégique National de Lutte Contre les Mines Antipersonnel et les Restes Explosifs de Guerre en République Démocratique du Congo 2023–2032", January 2022, p. 11.

25 Ibid., p. 63.

26 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 4.

27 Ibid., p. 23.

28 Ibid., p. 5.

## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

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DR Congo has 24 national standards developed with support from the GICHD<sup>29</sup> and the national strategy for 2018–19 called for revision of the standards and awareness raising of their content through training.<sup>30</sup> CCLAM reported in June 2019 it had revised the National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTSGs) during 2018, amending mainly the standards relating to demining techniques and safety of deminers.<sup>31</sup>

### OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

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International engagement with DR Congo's mine action programme decreased following the closure of programmes by NPA in 2019 and The Development Initiative (TDI) in February 2020. That left DanChurchAid (DCA) as the only international humanitarian demining organisation active in DR Congo. In 2022, DCA's mine action operation employed a total of 32 people, including 1 international staff member and 10 deminers. DCA's country office is located in Goma, with an office in Kabalo and a field camp in Kasinge which support its mine action activities in Kabalo district of Tanganyika province. DCA has tackled mine contamination in a project funded by the US State Department Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA) but does not address CMR.<sup>32</sup> A Korean International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) project (2023–24) also focuses on strengthening the capacity of DR Congo's mine clearance efforts by providing training in survey and clearance for national operators and capacity building of CCLAM.<sup>33</sup>

UNMAS deployed an improvised explosive device (IED) disposal team consisting of two international staff based in North Kivu province but its activities did not address CMR. UNMAS also contracted five multi-task teams from AFRILAM in 2021. Three of the teams were engaged largely in tasks in support of MONUSCO in North and South Kivu and Ituri provinces, while the other two were assigned to supporting DR Congo's mine action programme in Kasai central, Kasai Oriental, and Kasai Occidental. None of these teams conducted any CMR clearance.<sup>34</sup> No update for 2022 was available at the time of writing.

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## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2022

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The DR Congo has not reported any survey or clearance of CMR since 2019.

The CCM Article 7 report submitted voluntarily by the DR Congo in May 2022 showed that DR Congo had released a total of 57,857m<sup>2</sup> of cluster munition-contaminated area in five provinces (Equateur, Maniema, Sud Kivu, Tanganyika, and Tshopo) between 2017 and December 2019 and destroyed 572 submunitions.<sup>35</sup> CCLAM has not reported any subsequent clearance of CMR.

### PROGRESS TOWARDS COMPLETION

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The lack of timely reporting by DR Congo on any aspect of survey or clearance prevents a determination of progress towards completion.

As a CCM signatory, DR Congo had set a target of ratifying the convention by the end of 2018 but has left that target unfulfilled and has provided no clarity on its plans for survey or clearance of CMR, nor a timeline for completion.

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29 Statement of DR Congo, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, 2 July 2020.

30 "Stratégie Nationale de Lutte Antimines 2018–2019", November 2017, p. 34.

31 Skype interview with Jean-Denis Larsen, NPA, 24 April 2019; and email, 24 May 2019.

32 Email from Miroslav Skoumal, DCA, 26 April 2023.

33 Email from UNMAS Headquarters, 24 July 2023.

34 Email from Jean-Denis Larsen, UNMAS, 31 May 2022.

35 Article 7 Report (covering the period 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2021), Form F.